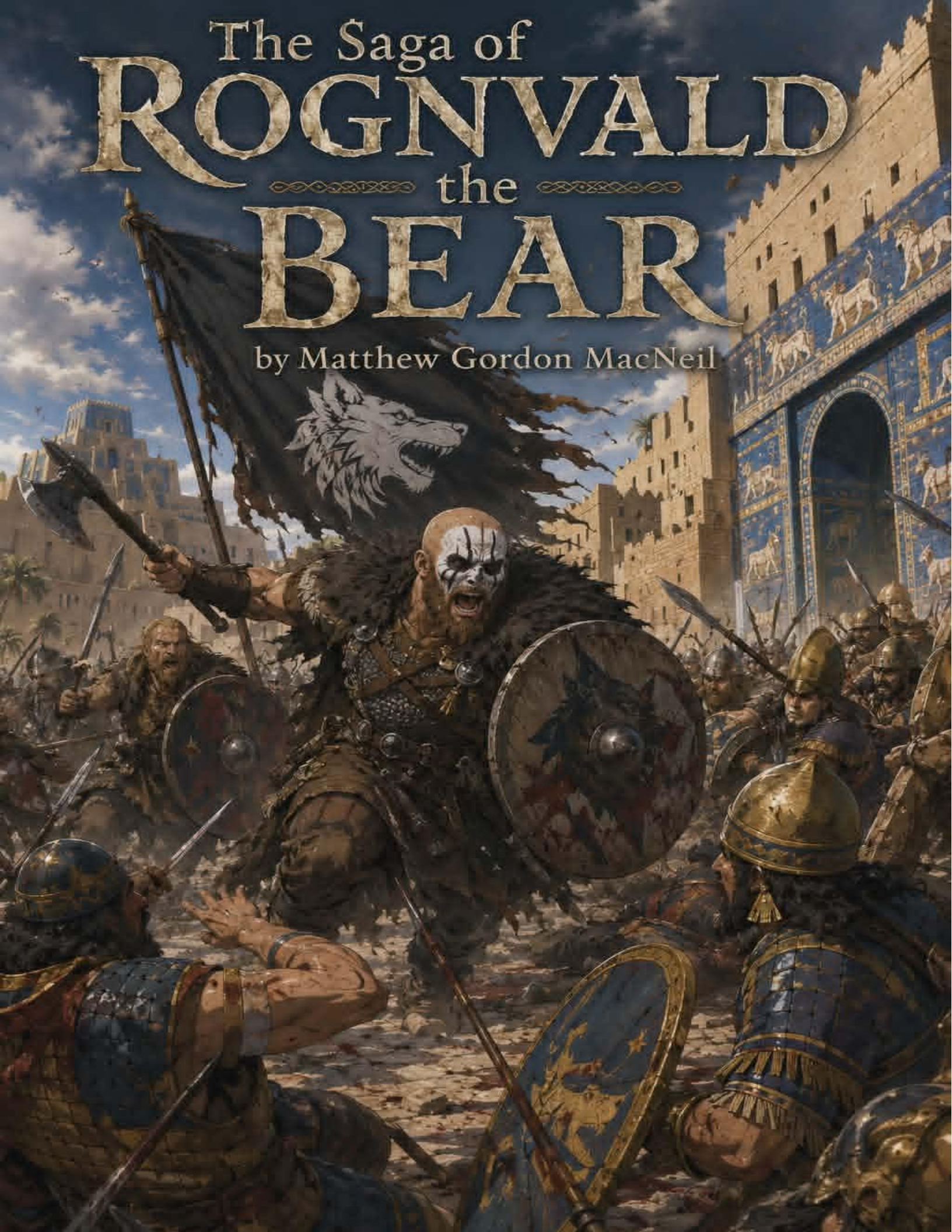
The Saga of
ROGNVALD
the
BEAR
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Notes:

Readers should first look into *The Children of the Wolf and Raven: A History of the Early Germanic People* if they have not already as this work deals directly with information laid down there and will not make sense otherwise. You can find it on my Internet Archive profile.

Chapter 1: Origins of the Bear

Ur-Nammu had established a Kingdom that would dominate Sumeria and other parts of the Middle East for over a century. In all but title he and his descendants were the virtual Kings of Sumeria, the lesser Kings acting more as governors than royalty in their own right. This status allowed the King of Ur and his descendants to establish contacts with foreigners on Sumeria's behalf.

One nation Ur-Nammu's descendant, Amar-Sin, made a friendship with was the Samothean Empire, an Imperial State that stretched from what is now Britain, much of France, Greenland, Iceland, and all of what is today Canada save British Columbia. This relationship granting him greater access to Egypt and to the West.

It also opened up opportunities for men and women in Samothean territories to move about Sumeria more freely,

and no group made more use of this than the Germanic people of Greenland and Iceland. A warrior culture (whose early history I covered in depth in my book Children of the Wolf and Raven, also free to read on AO3, which I suggest you read to get an understanding of what's being discussed here), they eagerly formed warbands and embarked on mercenary work throughout Sumeria and other regions.

One such warband, known as the Wolves of Midgard, was formed in 2050 BC by Rognvald Raewaldsson, known as the Bear. A veteran of the wars of King Longho, the Samothean ruler who brought most of Canada under the Empire's control, Rognvald was always seeking new experiences and saw the Middle East as a perfect new battleground to prove himself in.

A descendant of Ask and Embla, the first leaders of the Germanic people as well as Widukind the Rune Giver through his daughter Bestla, Rognvald was proud of his heritage and wanted to add to his ancestor' legacy, and war was his forte.

A father himself, with five daughters, the leader of the Wolves of Midgard wanted to secure their future with large dowries and the Middle East was his way to do this as, much like today

unfortunately, the region was rife in conflict and a mercenary could become very rich if he or she found the right patron, and in Amar-Sin the Bear did.

The King of Ur was more than willing to buy the services of the Germanic warriors, hearing tales of their exploits in the wars of conquest in North America. Rognvald, a third generation resident in Northern Canada, his family hailing from what is today the Yukon, was tougher than many of his peers, living as he did on the edge of the frontier and surviving by trapping, trading with Native tribes, and hunting for his own meat.

His great great grandfather, Halvar Tortsteinsson, moved from Greenland to the North when free land was on offer, snatching it up without much regard to what kind of life he and his descendants might have to live.

Halvar lived to eighty, a hardy Germanic man who faced the worst life had to offer, losing six children and his wife before his own death, but his strength was passed down the family line to Raedwald, Rognvald's father, who became Chieftain of their small village of Hrolfstag upon defeating the former Chieftain, Alvsin Magnisson, in single combat.

This position did not grant his family an easier life, on the contrary it placed greater responsibilities on Rognvald and his elder brother Ragen for they needed to look after their people's needs before their own. Both brothers did their best to live up to Germanic tradition but Rognvald, more concerned with his own family, broke away from this when he joined the Samothean forces in its wars, earning good pay, and teaching him he enjoyed the life of a full time warrior.

His wife, an ethnic Egyptian woman, Sarriah, was not a fan of this change in careers for obvious reasons. Born in what is today the Canadian West, present day Manitoba, Sarriah was the daughter of immigrants from Lower Egypt.

Her father, Teremun, was a Commander in the Samothean Navy and had seen action against pirates in the British Channel before retiring on an officer's pension, being ennobled by his King, he used this money to buy an estate in the province of Kengir.

Teremun helped build up his town, called Amun's Rest near present day Loon Lake in Saskatchewan, becoming its Head

Man within six years of his arrival. While Sarriah was born in Manitoba as her parents were visiting maternal relatives, she spent her formative years in Amun's Rest.

She married Rognvald at the age of nineteen, the two falling in love when the frontiersman, on his rare visits West, came to her town with his brother, wanting to see the Temple of Amun the townspeople constructed in honour of one of the most important Gods in ancient Egyptian religion.

It was, all things considered. a beautiful structure. Made of imported sandstone Teremun bought, the former naval officer hired craftsmen throughout the West to build it, taking three years to complete. While other Temples and Shrines existed throughout Kengir to Sumerian, Egyptian, Samothean, and Germanic Gods, most did not rival Amun's Rest's Temple in grandness.

Rognvald's trip to the town not only brought him to the attention of Sarriah, but also introduced him to the Egyptian Pantheon of deities and like many Germanic Pagans in his time and after, Rognvald didn't waste time in incorporating them into his own belief system, wearing an Eye of Ra

pendant during his career in the Samothen army, his body covered in Rune tattoos for equal protection.

Sarriah knew the agonies of a wife while her husband was away to war, hating every month that passed and she heard nothing of his fate, so when Rognvald approached her upon his idea to form the Wolves of Midgard she was quick to denounce the whole enterprise.

He expected this, she was relieved when Longho's conquests were at an end and he returned home. But the long days of hunting, trapping, and tending to the homestead began to wear on him mentally. He hated feeling like this, he knew he should be grateful to be home with his family as so many of his comrades never returned to theirs, but there was always nagging in his soul. He needed more out of life than a simple frontier existence.

In Germanic society women, whether they be Germanic themselves or 'foreign', had a say in what their husbands did, though no person, man or woman, could force their will upon their spouse if they truly wanted something else. Sarriah tried her best to persuade him to reconsider, using their children as

the prime motivator to settle down into a normal life. She even suggested he take up guard duty for Hrolfstag if he needed 'action'.

This suggestion made him laugh. Hrolfstag, for all the brawls and arguments that happened at the local tavern, was no dangerous frontier town. The last serious threat was during the Samothean Civil War during Longho's uncle's Druis' reign when Hrolfstag suffered raids from rebels as the village stayed loyal to the King.

Raedwald fought in these battles as a young man, passing down the stories to his sons while they ate around the hearth fire at night. They were exciting tales, Rognvald wishing in his youthful naivete at the time that another Civil War would happen so once again excitement might come their way.

Of course as a grown man he was grateful his children could grow up in peace like he did, but he was not fit for guard duty. He was a battle seeker, as he explained to Sarriah, who despaired.

The bulk of the members of the Wolves came from his former army buddies, chief among them Iras, who was not Germanic but Samothean, hailing from what is today Ayrshire, Scotland.

Iras served with Rognvald during the harshest of Longho's battles, forming a close bond that was akin to brotherhood. They bled, ate, and slept side by side, while a dozen other friends fell in battle they pulled through and survived the war together.

Iras, who was living in present day Nova Scotia along the eastern shore, was in contact with Rognvald via letter. Like his friend he had married, his wife being a Samothean woman born in Kengir, in what is today New Glasgow, whose family came from present day England, and had a son, Trien, but wanted a better life than that of a fisherman.

But unlike Rognvald, Iras' reasons for this wasn't out of some battle lust but his desire to leave his wife and son a fortune so that, should anything ever happen to him, they could live comfortably without worrying about working again.

Other men Raedwaldsson was in contact with were Germanic warriors seeking what he was, or Sumerians and Egyptians down on their luck. It was a motley crew, men brought together either from a desire to relieve the past, to find wealth, or to give themselves purpose again.

Sarriah eventually gave in, knowing Rognvald could never be talked out of things. But she did make him swear before the Gods, both the Aesir and Amun and his Court, that he would do all he could to come back safely to her and the girls.

Rognvald swore upon his arm ring, the most sacred symbol for all Germanic men then and for many centuries to come, that he would do his best to return. He swore this oath in the name of Odin, Tyr, Thor, Amun and Osiris.

Before he left Rognvald tasked his eldest daughter, Ragna, fifteen, in guarding her sisters and mother. He had been training her to be a Shield Maiden and trusted in her abilities with an axe. She proudly accepted this charge.

With everything in place Rognvald met with his elder brother

the night before he was to set out to the West to meet his band in Amun's Rest. Ragen, now Chieftain of Hrolfstag, gave Rognvald his word he would visit his homestead, which lie a two miles outside the village, often to check in on his sister in law and his nieces. The two drank and feasted together one last time, Rognvald nearly having to call his travel plans off due to his hangover.

But, he was able to brush it off and begin his trek towards the Western portion of Kengir. It took him half the month of April to make it, but make it he did.

In Amun's Rest he met with Iras and three hundred others who were willing to travel to the Middle East. Most had never been there, even those whose parents came from Sumeria, so it was a new experience for them.

Rognvald assumed the position of War Chief, the traditional title for Germanic leaders leading a raiding party or warband, making Iras his sub Chieftain, second in command.

He appointed Seti-Hor, an Kengir-Egyptian from Nova Scotia, a

friend of Iras, as the band's medical officer, the Egyptian having experience treating wounds under his father, Ramose, who was a doctor back in Egypt before coming West.

To Varni, an old friend and cousin who he grew up with in Hrolfstag, Rognvald gave the task of acting as the band's Shaman. A Ulfhednar, or Wolf Berserker, Varni wore a Wolf headdress in battle as his only clothing apart from trousers, and was dedicated to the Allfather as most of his kind were. He was exactly who Rognvald wanted as their spiritual guide in the days ahead.

When everything was prepared the band set off for the coast where they boarded a ship headed to Sumeria, seeking to enter the employ of Amar-Sin, High King and richest man in the land.

Chapter 2: The Prince of Ur

Amar-Sin was a pragmatic and calculating man. He knew the worth of a good warband, especially one headed by veterans

of one of the most successful campaigns in recent history. But, he was also a racist and Xenophobe who did not want any foreigners 'infecting' the royal Court.

So, to this end, he agreed to hire Rognvald and his warriors, but assigned them to his younger brother, Shu-Sin, the Governor of Lagash and leader of the Ur Empire's armies.

The King thought he was insulting his brother by placing 'savages' into his ranks, the two always having a bitter rivalry. But Shu-Sin, contrary to what Amar-Sin thought, took it as a sign from the Gods. He saw how formidable the foreigners looked, how Rognvald and Iras carried themselves, and knew they were exactly what he needed.

For you see, Shu-Sin did not simply quietly loathe his brother as the King did him. No, he was plotting a revolt, and had been for two years at this point. When the King sent Rognvald and his warriors his way Shu-Sin believed, based on a prayer he made to the King of the Annunaki, Anu, asking for a sign his revolt would be divinely backed, that they represented divine blessing on his plans, and welcomed them accordingly.

But it wasn't just due to his religious beliefs that the Governor of Lagash accepted the men, it was because he was genuinely open minded towards other cultures and peoples in ways his elder brother wasn't. He found foreign peoples endlessly fascinating, especially those like Rognvald and the Wolves of Midgard who hailed from across the Ocean and land the Prince had no idea about.

For his part Rognvald took an immediate liking to the Prince, whom he found more frank and honest than the Sumerian High King. Where Shu-Sin told you exactly what he thought of you his elder brother would dance around it in order to not offend people even if he truly did dislike them.

In a sense the Chieftain understood why he did this but still found the habit dishonest and cowardly. A true leader, in Rognvald's mind, never played with his people but did what he must for them.

The first few months in Sumeria passed relatively uneventful for the Wolves of Midgard, their days consisting of following Shu-Sin about on his daily errands and offering him protection should any ill befall him. During this time the Prince added an

additional hundred men to the band made up of cousins and vassals he trusted.

The first true test for Rognvald and his men came Amar-Sin, hearing of nomadic raiders close to Sumeria's borders to the east, sent his brother to deal with the problem. Shu-Sin rode out with the Wolves of Midgard and two hundred Sumerian soldiers to confront the enemy.

The raiders, a band of Chinese men who, dissatisfied with how things were in China, decided to form their own tribe and strike out on their own, were called by the Sumerians called them Nedisku 'Dark Ones' due to their darker skin tone. They raided outlying villages and towns of the Empire, taking scores of innocent lives and capturing dozens more to use as slaves.

The first clash between Shu-Sin's army and the Nedisku occurred on what is today the border between Iraq and Iran at a place known as Ninhursag's Stone, named after the Sumerian Goddess who was believed to have come to mankind there in centuries past.

Rognvald and his men, specifically those from a Germanic background, prepared for the upcoming battle by holding a Symbel the night before. Symbel, a drinking ceremony where one toasted the Gods and their ancestors, took oaths to protect each other or to perform some feat in battle, was an important part of Germanic culture since the days of Ask and Embla.

Rognvald, as Chieftain of the band, hosted the Symbel just as his father and brother did in Hrolfstag. He passed the mead cup around to his men, listening to them name their ancestors going back as far as they knew, sometimes up to ten generations, or heard their prayers to the Aesir.

Iras led a separate ceremony for the non Germanic members of the group, incorporating elements of Samothean, Egyptian, and Sumerian practices into it. A small number did partake in the Symbel but most preferred their own religious rites in this time of heightened tension.

When the next day came Rognvald painted his face into a skull pattern, black cheeks, white nose and chin, and lips. Varni wore his wolf headdress while other Germanic warriors

applied war paint or went into battle bare chested. Their friends wore hand me down armour or, in Iras' case, armour he used during his military career.

Shu-Sin, riding in a chariot, led his men into battle against the raiders, his bronze armour glinting in the early morning sun. The Nedisku, while deadly opponents against untrained foes, fared poorly against the Prince's forces. The Wolves of Midgard, living up to the promise they made the High King, dealt the raiders a savage blow. Rognvald killed six with his axe alone and as a group thirty died by their hands.

By midday, when the battle was finally over and most of the Nedisku lie dead, the battle ended. There were a handful of survivors, including a few women and children unfortunate enough to be caught up in this chaos.

One of these women, Lao Min, was wife to Wu Fung, one of the leaders of the Nedisku who had died during the last hours of fighting. Corralled by Germanic warriors after the battle Lao Min, a beautiful woman with a curvy figure, was brought before Rognvald along with two small boys as 'spoils of war'.

The War Chief studied her and her children. Roughly four and two, the sons of Wu Fung cowered before the skull painted man, his animal furs drenched in the blood of their people. But despite his fearsome nature on the battlefield and his occasional harshness off it, the son of Raedwald was not a child killer or a slayer of women. Knowing the fate that awaited Lao Min and her children should he refuse them, he took them as his slaves upon Shu-Sin's permission.

Had he not done so its likely they would either have been given to a high ranking Sumerian official or sold on the slave market back in Ur, abused all the while. In contrast Rognvald treated them well, but they were still in the end his slaves, property he owned all rights to and could do as he wished with.

As such it is little surprise he used this power imbalance to coerced Lao Min into a sexual relationship with him, being taken by her body. His love for Sarriah, while genuine, did not stop him from extra marital affairs.

Lao Min fell pregnant soon after becoming Rognvald's concubine (to use a polite word for it) and in 2049 BC she gave

birth to a son, whom Rognvald named Ingeld. Being his first son Ingeld, and the only one of his children close, became the apple of his father's eye. He was always playing with him when he wasn't on duty, and slowly Lao Min, whether it be due to what we would refer to as Stockholm syndrome or out of genuine affection, came to love Rognvald.

In 2047 BC she gave birth to another boy whom she, with the Chieftain's blessing, named Gongsun after the Yellow Emperor, China's first Sovereign. Despite the circumstances that brought them together the three made a happy family.

But things never go according to how one wishes, whether they be of good intentions or ill, and in 2045 BC word reached Shu-Sin his brother knew of his plans and wanted to see him in person.

Chapter 3: The Bear of War

Deciding to only take the Wolves of Midgard for protection, Shu-Sin set off from Lagash to the capital. The reason he took

the band from Kengir and not his entire force is due to his hope he could somehow convince his brother what he heard was merely rumour. A lie concocted to cause a rift in Court, possibly spread by their enemies to weaken the State so that the true rebels could rise up under its shadow and take them all by surprise.

It was a gamble. Amar-Sin was no fool, but there was little other choice than open revolt, and the Prince wasn't ready for that yet.

Rognvald had an inkling of what his Lord planned, but never knew the full extent of it and, to him, it made little difference either way. He was a warrior, paid to fight battles. He swore an oath of loyalty to both Amar-Sin and Shu-Sin, if he needed to break one to make sure his family kept being provided for, he was willing to do so.

The march back to Ur took two days as Shu-Sin stopped to plan his next moves with his Generals--and co-conspirators, should things come to worse. During this stop Rognvald and his men enjoyed downtime by listening to Varni tell stories of the Gods and of the far North of Kengir.

These tales made the Chieftain long for his homeland and his family there. It also, for the first time, made him think about what he would do once his service in Sumeria was over. Would he take Lao Min and the boys home? Or send them back to China?

The second option immediately struck him as cruel and selfish. He made the choice to sleep with her, abandoning her in such a way was cowardly. But taking her back home meant risking the wrath of Sarriah, an equally horrid prospect.

He spoke with Iras about it that night, his Samothean friend having little wisdom to impart besides the fact that he should keep his bits inside his trousers! Rognvald laughed despite himself, he couldn't help but agree.

No matter what though, he promised his friend and the Gods, he wouldn't leave his new family behind. There was a way to fuse them into his old one.

When the Prince and his mercenaries arrived in Ur, they were

greeted warmly by Amar-Sin and his entourage, an unexpected turn of events that put Rognvald and Iras immediately on edge.

Amar-Sin was accompanied by his advisor, an Elamite man named Mardu, who wore expensive blue robes dotted with golden buttons. His fingers, wearing rings of gold and silver, played with a long silvery beard.

The royal guard stood behind the King in the marketplace, eyeing Rognvald and his men. The Chieftain stared right back, studying each man intensely, knowing at any moment he might be close enough to one of them to feel their breath.

Iras whispered something about falling back, but Rognvald said it was no use. Amar-Sin had them trapped now. What would be would be.

He looked back at Lao Min and his sons, she looked nervous, but the boys, amazed at the sights and sounds of the city, were unaware of any danger.

Rognvald turned back to look at Ur's King, making a silent vow to Odin he would return to Kengir. Amar-Sin gestured for his brother to come inside and wash the trail dust off. Shu-Sin accepted and followed the King inside the royal palace.

When Rognvald and the others tried to follow, they were prevented by the guards, an ominous sign. Shu-Sin asked his brother to let them by, but Amar-Sin said he entertained barbarians enough the last few years and told them to stay put.

The guards wore impressive armour engraved with Dragons, fruit, and other symbols of the Annunaki. Rognvald noted how the officers, two middle aged men, had oiled hands, their fingers, like Mardu, covered in gems.

It was the one thing he loathed about the Sumerians, how they wore lavish things even on duty. To him, and other Germanii, it was proper to wear these things only in the Great Halls or while visiting neighbouring Chieftains, not when commanding men in battle.

Apart from a finely made sword or axe, Rognvald did not permit his men to wear fancy things, not even Iras, but the man was never a dandy anyway.

Rognvald dropped his hand to his axe hilt, whipping it out in a powerful blow against one of the officer's heads, feeling an explosion of blood as the man dropped.

Madness descended upon the marketplace as women and children, men and boys shrieked, running to escape the spot made a battlefield. Rognvald took down the other officer with a body slam, whacking him with his axe, opening his face.

Amar-Sin, not expecting such a sudden shift, scrambled to get away, but the Chieftain was faster. He rushed Mardu, the Elamite attempting to take Shu-Sin hostage, demolishing the man's forehead and then, leaping off the body, ran after the fleeing King into the palace.

Ur's King called on his guards inside to save him, but Rognvald, living up to his nickname of The Bear made short work of them, continuing the chase.

He chased the King into the throne room where Amar-Sin stood terrified. There was nowhere to run. Rognvald moved in, and like many who are desperate to live Amar-Sin started sputtering out offers of land, title, or anything at all if he might survive to reign another day.

The Chieftain grabbed the King by his throat and with two solid blows from his axe Amar-Sin fell to the floor, his blood soaking into the cracks.

By day's end Shu-Sin was declared King of Ur, all those who refused to swear loyalty to him executed along with the remaining guards.

For their service the Wolves of Midgard were given tremendous amounts of wealth, far more than they ever expected, allowing each man to retire once they reached home.

Within two months Rognvald led his band back across the sea to North America where they disbanded and went their

separate ways to spend their money however they pleased.

The Chieftain headed back to Hrolfstag with Lao Min and his two boys, and, to no surprise, Sarriah was furious and hurt at his infidelity. But, unable to turn children away, she accepted Ingeld and Gongsun into her home. When it came to Lao Min, however, she would not. She did not demand he turn her away completely, but Sarriah refused to let her inside the home.

Accepting this Rognvald built Lao Min her own home beside theirs, Sarriah agreeing to it. It was a rocky first year but, over the next decade Sarriah slowly grew to like Lao Min and the two became friends, if never close.

Rognvald the Bear never ventured out of Kengir, content to remain in his home province. He died in 2000 BC in his bed, his children and Sarriah by his side.

Ingeld Rognvaldsson became, through a daughter, an ancestor to Norr Thorrisson, founder of the Kingdom of Trondheim, and through Norr, Ingeld and Rognvald became ancestors to the

House of Odin.